

CLAIMS

We claim:

- 1
2 1. A method for a central server to manage remote monitoring tasks, comprising:
3 receiving a request from a user of a user device to monitor a remote location;
4 determining a remote location to be monitored;
5 enabling communication between a sensor at the remote location and the user
6 device; and
7 crediting value to the user in accordance with an amount of time the user
8 device has been in communication with the sensor for remote monitoring purposes.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the user device is at least one of a personal
2 computer and a television set.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the request includes an account identifier.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the request includes a task identifier.

1 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
2 determining a shift for monitoring the remote location; and wherein the step of
3 enabling communication between the sensor and the user device occurs at approximately a
4 start of the shift.

1 6. The method of claim 5 wherein the shift includes a date and a time.

1 7. The method of claim 1 wherein an identity of the remote location is not
2 communicated to the user.

1 8. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of registering the user to
2 monitor remote locations.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein communication between the sensor and the
2 user device involves the Internet.

1 10. The method of claim 1 wherein communication between the sensor and the
2 user device includes at least one of video communication and audio communication.

1 11. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of crediting value includes crediting a
2 financial account.

1 12. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
2 determining whether predetermined criteria have been satisfied prior to
3 enabling communication between the sensor and the user device.

1 13. The method of claim 12 wherein the predetermined criteria includes a
2 minimum number of users to monitor the remote location.

1 14. The method of claim 12 wherein the predetermined criteria includes a user
2 rating.

1 15. The method of claim 5 further comprising the steps of:
2 disabling communication between the sensor at the remote location and the
3 user; and
4 enabling communication between a sensor at a second remote location and the
5 user,
6 wherein the steps of disabling and enabling occur during the shift.

1 16. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
2 transmitting a test communication to the user at the user device; and
3 determining whether a response to the test communication is received within a
4 predetermined period of time.

1 17. The method of claim 16 further comprising the step of:
2 updating a user rating based on the response.

1 18. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
2 outputting an offer to the user at the user device to enter the user in a
3 sweepstakes; and
4 receiving a response to the offer.

1 19. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of:
2 entering the user in the sweepstakes.

1 20. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
2 transmitting entertainment video to the user at the user device.

1 21. The method of claim 20 wherein entertainment video is transmitted to the user
2 at random times.

1 22. The method of claim 20 wherein entertainment video is transmitted to the user
2 for random durations.

1 23. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
2 receiving from the user device notification of an emergency at the remote
3 location; and
4 contacting a third party in response to the received notification.

1 24. The method of claim 23 wherein the third party is contacted by telephone.

1 25. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
2 determining a pay rate; and
3 crediting value to the user in accordance with the pay rate.

1 26. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
2 receiving from the user device notification of an emergency at the remote
3 location, and wherein the step of crediting value to the user includes paying a bonus for each
4 legitimate emergency detected by the user.

1 27. A method for a central server to manage remote monitoring tasks, comprising:
2 assigning to a user of a data network a remote monitoring task including a
3 remote location to monitor and a shift for monitoring the remote location; and
4 providing the user with information relating to the remote monitoring task, the
5 information to be transmitted by the user to the central server at approximately a start of the
6 shift.

1 28. The method of claim 27 wherein the information comprises at least one of an
2 account identifier, a task identifier and the shift.

1 29. The method of claim 27 wherein the data network is the Internet.

1 30. The method of claim 27 wherein the data network is a cable television
2 network.

1 31. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of:
2 determining whether predetermined criteria have been satisfied prior to
3 providing the user with the information to be transmitted to the central server.

1 32. The method of claim 31 wherein the predetermined criteria includes a user
2 rating.

1 33. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of:
2 preventing the user from monitoring a remote location that is within a
3 predetermined distance from the user's address.

1 34. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of:
2 preventing the user from monitoring a remote location more than a
3 predetermined number of times.

1 35. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of:
2 preventing the user from monitoring a remote location during a predetermined
3 period of time.

1 36. The method of claim 27 wherein the step of assigning a remote monitoring
2 task is based on user-specified preferences concerning the shift.

1 37. The method of claim 27 further comprising the steps of:
2 determining an emergency procedure to be followed by the user in the event
3 the user detects an emergency at the remote location; and
4 transmitting the emergency procedure to the user.

1 38. The method of claim 37 wherein the emergency procedure includes a
2 procedure for contacting a third party.

1 39. The method of claim 38 wherein the third party is contacted by telephone.

1 40. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of:
2 reminding the user of the remote monitoring task prior to a start of the shift.

1 41. A method for a central server to manage remote monitoring tasks, comprising:
2 determining a remote location to be monitored;

3 enabling communication between a sensor at the remote location and a
4 plurality of users of a data network;

5 determining an amount of time each user of the plurality of users has
6 monitored the remote location; and

7 crediting value to each user of the plurality of users for monitoring the remote
8 location in accordance with the amount of time that each user has monitored the remote
9 location.

1 42. The method of claim 41 further comprising the steps of:
2 determining a shift for monitoring the remote location; and wherein the step of
3 enabling communication between the sensor and the plurality of users occurs at
4 approximately a start of the shift.

1 43. The method of claim 41 further comprising the step of:
2 recruiting users to monitor the remote location.

1 44. The method of claim 41 further comprising the step of:
2 informing a user of the plurality of users that he is the only user monitoring
3 the remote location.

1 45. The method of claim 41 further comprising the steps of:
2 receiving notification of an emergency at the remote location from a first user
3 of the plurality of users; and
4 contacting a third party if at least a predetermined amount of the plurality of
5 users reports the emergency.

1 46. The method of claim 45 further comprising the step of:
2 informing a second user of the plurality of users of the notification of the
3 emergency at the remote location.

1 SUBA 2 47. A method for a central server to manage remote monitoring tasks, comprising:
2 receiving a request from a user of a user device to monitor a remote location in
3 exchange for value;
4 determining a remote location to be monitored;
5 enabling communication between a sensor at the remote location and the user
6 device; and
7 measuring user attentiveness while the user device is in communication with
8 the sensor.

1 48. The method of claim 47 wherein the user device is a personal computer.

1 49. The method of claim 47 further comprising the step of:
2 determining a shift for monitoring the remote location; and wherein the step of
3 enabling communication between the sensor and the user device occurs at approximately a
4 start of the shift.

1 50. The method of claim 47 further comprising the step of:
2 determining whether predetermined criteria have been satisfied prior to
3 enabling communication between the sensor and the user device.

1 51. The method of claim 50, wherein the predetermined criteria includes a
2 minimum user rating required to monitor the remote location.

1 52. The method of claim 51, wherein the minimum user rating is based on
2 measured user attentiveness.

1 53. The method of claim 47 further comprising the step of crediting value to a
2 financial account of the user for monitoring the remote location.

1 54. The method of claim 47 wherein the step of measuring user attentiveness
2 includes:
3 transmitting a test communication to the user at the user device; and
4 determining whether a response to the test communication has been received
5 within a predetermined period of time.

1 55. The method of claim 54 wherein the test communication is a predetermined
2 video of an emergency.

1 56. The method of claim 54 wherein the test communication is a query.

1 57. The method of claim 54 further comprising the step of:
2 determining whether the response is an expected response.

1 58. The method of claim 47 wherein the step of measuring user attentiveness
2 includes:
3 receiving a biometric measurement of the user.

1 59. The method of claim 58 wherein the biometric measurement is a retinal scan.

1 60. The method of claim 47 wherein the step of measuring user attentiveness
2 includes the step of:

3 enabling a second user to monitor the user monitoring the remote location.

1 61. The method of claim 47 further comprising the step of causing an audible
2 alarm to be transmitted to the user at the user device if the user is not attentive.

1 62. The method of claim 47 further comprising the step of:
2 penalizing the user if the user is not attentive.

1 63. The method of claim 62 wherein the step of penalizing the user includes
2 paying the user only if the user is attentive.

1 64. The method of claim 62 wherein the step of penalizing the user includes
2 crediting an account of the user an amount that is less than if the user had been attentive.

1 65. The method of claim 62 wherein the step of penalizing the user includes
2 charging an account of the user.

1 66. The method of claim 62 wherein the step of penalizing the user includes
2 preventing future monitoring by the user.

1 67. The method of claim 47 further comprising the steps of:
2 determining whether the user is attentive; and
3 if the user is not attentive, replacing the user with an alternate user to monitor
4 the remote location.

1 SUB 3 68. A method for alerting a user of a computer of an emergency at a remotely
2 monitored location, comprising:
3 maintaining the computer in communication with a sensor at the remotely
4 monitored location;
5 transmitting a signal indicative of a predetermined event detected by the
6 sensor to the computer; and
7 transmitting video data from a camera at the remotely monitored location to
8 the computer,
9 wherein the signal causes the computer to preempt a program unrelated to
10 remote monitoring to display the video data.

1 69. The method of claim 68 wherein the step of maintaining the computer in
2 communication with the remote sensor is performed via a browser.

1 70. The method of claim 68 wherein the program is a word processor.

1 71. The method of claim 68 wherein the predetermined event includes at least one
2 of a predetermined level of motion, sound, pressure and light intensity.

1 72. A method for alerting an individual of an emergency at a remote location,
2 comprising:
3 transmitting a signal indicative of a predetermined event detected by a sensor
4 at the remote location to a television set; and
5 transmitting video data from a camera at the remote location to the television
6 set,
7 wherein the signal causes the television set to preempt a television program to
8 display the video data.

1 73. The method of claim 72 wherein the predetermined event includes at least one
2 of a predetermined level of motion, sound, pressure and light intensity.

1 74. The method of claim 73 further comprising the step of transmitting a signal to
2 the television set to sound an alarm to inform the user of the predetermined event detected at
3 the sensor.

1 75. A method for a user of a data network to monitor remote locations in exchange
2 for value:
3 receiving a data stream generated by a sensor at a remote location;
4 monitoring the data stream for an amount of time; and
5 receiving credit to a user account for monitoring the data stream for that
6 amount of time.

1 76. The method of claim 75 further comprising the step of transmitting an account
2 identifier to the central server.

1 77. The method of claim 75 further comprising the step of providing a task
2 identifier to the central server.

1 78. The method of claim 75 wherein the data network is the Internet.

1 79. The method of claim 75 wherein the data stream comprises at least one of a
2 video data stream and an audio data stream.

1 80. The method of claim 75 wherein the credit is monetary.

1 81. The method of claim 75 wherein the data stream comprises a plurality of data
2 streams.

1 82. The method of claim 81 wherein the step of monitoring comprises monitoring
2 the plurality of data streams substantially simultaneously.

1 83. The method of claim 75 wherein the step of monitoring the data stream
2 includes the step of monitoring for an emergency at the remote location.

1 84. The method of claim 83 further comprising the step of notifying the central
2 server in the event an emergency is detected.

1 85. The method of claim 75 further comprising the steps of:
2 receiving a predetermined video of an emergency; and
3 responding to the predetermined video of an emergency within a
4 predetermined period of time.

1 86. The method of claim 75 further comprising the steps of:
2 receiving queries; and
3 responding to the queries within a predetermined period of time.

1 87. A method for alerting a user of a computer of an emergency at a remotely
2 monitored location, comprising:
3 maintaining communication with a remote sensor via a central server;
4 running a program on the computer, wherein the program is unrelated to
5 remote monitoring; and
6 pre-empting the program if a predetermined event is detected by the remote
7 sensor.

1 88. The method of claim 87 wherein the step of maintaining communication with
2 a remote sensor is performed via a browser.

1 89. The method of claim 87 wherein said predetermined event includes a
2 predetermined level of motion or sound.

1 90. The method of claim 87 further comprising the step of:
2 receiving video data from a camera at the remotely monitored location, and
3 wherein the step of preempting includes displaying the video data.

1 91. A method for a television set to alert an individual of an emergency at a
2 remote location, comprising:
3 receiving a signal indicative of a predetermined event detected by a sensor at
4 the remote location; and
5 in response to the signal, preempting a television program to display video
6 data received from a camera at the remote location.

1 92. The method of claim 91 wherein the predetermined event includes at least one
2 of a predetermined level of motion, sound, pressure and light intensity.

1 93. The method of claim 92 further comprising the step of sounding an alarm to
2 inform the user of the predetermined event having been detected by the remote sensor.

1 94. A system for managing remote monitoring tasks comprising:
2 a memory device;
3 a processor in communication with the memory device; and
4 the processor configured to:
5 receive a request from a user of a user device to monitor a remote location;
6 determine a remote location to be monitored;
7 enable communication between a sensor at the remote location and the user
8 device; and
9 credit value to the user in accordance with an amount of time the user device
10 has been in communication with the sensor.

1 SUB A5 } 95. The system of claim 94 wherein the user devices is a personal computer.

1 96. The system of claim 94 wherein the request includes an account identifier.

1 97. The system of claim 94 wherein the request includes a task identifier.

1 98. The system of claim 94 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 determine a shift for monitoring the remote location and wherein the processor enables
3 communication between the sensor and the user device at approximately a start of the shift.

1 99. The system of claim 94 wherein the processor is further configured to register
2 the user to monitor remote locations.

1 100. The system of claim 94 wherein communication between the sensor and the
2 user device involves the Internet.

1 101. The system of claim 94 wherein communication between the sensor and the
2 user device includes at least one of video communication and audio communication.

1 102. The system of claim 94 wherein processor is further configured to determine
2 whether predetermined criteria have been satisfied prior to enabling communication between
3 the sensor and the user device.

1 103. The system of claim 102 wherein the predetermined criteria includes a
2 minimum number of users to monitor the remote location.

1 104. The system of claim 102 wherein the predetermined criteria includes a
2 minimum user rating.

1 105. The system of claim 98 wherein the processor is further configured to disable
2 communication between the sensor at the remote location and the user; and enable
3 communication between a sensor at a second remote location and the user during the shift.

1 106. The system of claim 94 wherein the processor is further configured to transmit
2 a test communication to the user at the user device; and determine whether a response to the
3 test communication is received within a predetermined period of time.

1 107. The system of claim 106 wherein the processor is further configured to update
2 a user rating based on the response.

1 108. The system of claim 94 wherein the processor is further configured to output
2 an offer to the user at the user device to enter the user in a sweepstakes; and receive a
3 response to the offer.

1 109. The method of claim 108 further comprising the step of:
2 entering the user in the sweepstakes.

1 110. The system of claim 94 wherein the processor is further configured to transmit
2 entertainment video to the user at the user device.

1 111. The method of claim 110 wherein entertainment video is transmitted to the
2 user at random times.

1 112. The method of claim 110 wherein entertainment video is transmitted to the
2 user for random durations.

1 113. The system of claim 94 wherein the processor is further configured to receive
2 from the user device notification of an emergency at the remote location; and contact a third
3 party in response to the received notification.

1 114. The system of claim 94 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 determine a pay rate; and credit value to the user in accordance with the pay rate.

1 115. The system of claim 114 wherein value is credited to a financial account.

1 116. The system of claim 94 wherein the processor is further configured to receive
2 from the user device notification of an emergency at the remote location, and pay a bonus for
3 each legitimate emergency detected by the user.

1 SUB 6) 117. A system for managing remote monitoring tasks comprising:
2 a memory device;
3 a processor in communication with the memory device;
4 and the processor configured to:
5 assign to a user of a data network a remote monitoring task including a remote
6 location to monitor and a shift for monitoring the remote location; and
7 provide the user with information relating to the remote monitoring task, the
8 information to be transmitted by the user to the central server at approximately a start of the
9 shift.

1 118. The system of claim 117 wherein the information comprises at least one of an
2 account identifier, a task identifier and the shift.

1 119. The system of claim 117 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 determine whether predetermined criteria have been satisfied prior to providing the user with
3 the information to be transmitted to the central server.

1 120. The system of claim 119 wherein the predetermined criteria includes a
2 minimum user rating required to monitor the remote location.

1 121. The system of claim 117 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 prevent the user from monitoring a remote location that is within a predetermined distance
3 from the user's address.

1 122. The system of claim 117 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 prevent the user from monitoring a remote location more than a predetermined number of
3 times.

1 123. The system of claim 117 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 prevent the user from monitoring a remote location during a predetermined period of time.

1 124. The system of claim 117 wherein the processor is further configured to assign
2 the remote monitoring task based on user-specified preferences concerning the shift.

1 125. The system of claim 117 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 determine an emergency procedure to be followed by the user in the event the user detects an
3 emergency at the remote location; and transmit the emergency procedure to the user.

1 126. The system of claim 117 wherein the processor is further configured to remind
2 the user of the remote monitoring task prior to a start of the shift.

1 SUB A7 127. A system for managing remote monitoring tasks comprising:
2 a memory device;
3 a processor in communication with the memory device;
4 and the processor configured to:
5 determine a remote location to be monitored;
6 enable communication between a sensor at the remote location and a plurality
7 of users of a data network;
8 determine an amount of time each user of the plurality of users has monitored
9 the remote location; and

10 credit value to at least one of the plurality of users for monitoring the remote
11 location.

1 128. The system of claim 127 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 determine a shift for monitoring the remote location; and wherein the processor enables
3 communication between the sensor and at least one of the plurality of users at approximately
4 a start of the shift.

1 129. The system of claim 127 wherein the processor is further configured to recruit
2 users to monitor the remote location.

1 130. The system of claim 127 wherein the processor is further configured to inform
2 a user of the plurality of users that he is the only user monitoring the remote location.

1 131. The system of claim 127 wherein the processor is further configured to receive
2 notification of an emergency at the remote location from a first user of the plurality of users;
3 and contact a third party if at least a predetermined amount of the plurality of users reports
4 the emergency.

1 132. The system of claim 131 wherein the processor is further configured to inform
2 a second user of the plurality of users of the notification of the emergency at the remote
3 location.

1 SUBA8) 133 A system for managing remote monitoring tasks comprising:
2 a memory device;
3 a processor in communication with the memory device;
4 and the processor configured to:
5 receive a request from a user of a user device to monitor a remote location in
6 exchange for value;
7 determine a remote location to be monitored;
8 enable communication between a sensor at the remote location and the user
9 device for remote monitoring purposes; and
10 measure user attentiveness while the user device is in communication with the
11 sensor.

1 134. The system of claim 133 wherein the user device is a personal computer.

1 135. The system of claim 133 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 determine a shift for monitoring the remote location; and wherein the processor enables
3 communication between the sensor and the user device at approximately a start of the shift.

1 136. The system of claim 133 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 determine whether predetermined criteria have been satisfied prior to enabling
3 communication between the sensor and the user device.

1 137. The system of claim 136 wherein the predetermined criteria includes a
2 minimum user rating required to monitor the remote location.

1 138. The system of claim 137 wherein the minimum user rating is based on
2 measured user attentiveness.

1 139. The system of claim 133 wherein the processor is further configured to credit
2 value to a financial account of the user for monitoring the remote location.

1 SUBA9 } 140. The system of claim 133 wherein the processor is configured to measures user
2 attentiveness by transmitting a test communication to the user at the user device; and
3 determining whether a response to the test communication has been received within a
4 predetermined period of time.

1 141. The system of claim 140 wherein the test communication is a predetermined
2 video of an emergency.

1 142. The system of claim 140 wherein the test communication is a query.

1 143. The system of claim 140 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 measure user attentiveness by determining whether the response is an expected response.

1 144. The system of claim 133 wherein the processor is further configured to receive
2 a biometric measurement of the user; and measure user attentiveness based on the biometric
3 measurement.

1 145. The system of claim 144 wherein the biometric measurement is a retinal scan.

1 146. The system of claim 133 wherein the processor is configured to measure user
2 attentiveness by enabling a second user to monitor the user monitoring the remote location.

1 147. The system of claim 133 wherein the processor is further configured to cause
2 an audible alarm to be transmitted to the user at the user device if the user is not attentive.

1 148. The system of claim 133 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 penalize the user if the user is not attentive.

1 149. The system of claim 148 wherein penalizing the user includes paying the user
2 only if the user is attentive.

1 150. The system of claim 148 wherein penalizing the user includes crediting the
2 user's account an amount that is less than if the user had been attentive.

1 151. The system of claim 148 wherein penalizing the user includes charging the
2 user's account.

1 152. The system of claim 148 wherein penalizing the user includes preventing
2 future monitoring by the user.

1 153. The system of claim 133 wherein the processor is further configured to replace
2 the user with an alternate user to monitor the remote location if the user is not attentive.

1 154. A system for alerting a user of a computer of an emergency at a remotely
2 monitored location comprising:

3 a memory device;

4 a processor in communication with the memory device;

5 and the processor configured to:

6 maintain the computer in communication with a remote sensor;

7 transmit a signal indicative of a predetermined event detected by the remote
8 sensor to the computer; and

9 transmit video data from a camera at the remotely monitored location to the
10 computer,

11 wherein the signal causes the computer to preempt a program unrelated to
12 remote monitoring to display the video data.

1 155. The system of claim 154 wherein the processor maintains the computer in
2 communication with a remote sensor via a browser.

1 156. The system of claim 154 wherein the program is a word processor.

1 157. The system of claim 154 wherein the predetermined event includes at least one
2 of a predetermined level of motion, sound, pressure and light intensity.

1 158. A system for alerting an individual of an emergency at a remote location,
2 comprising:

3 a memory device;

4 a processor in communication with the memory device;

5 and the processor configured to:

6 transmit a signal indicative of a predetermined event detected by a sensor at
7 the remote location to a television set; and

8 transmit video data from a camera at the remote location to the television set,

9 wherein the signal causes the television set to preempt a program to display
10 the video data.

1 159. The system of claim 158 wherein the predetermined event includes at least one
2 of a predetermined level of motion, sound, pressure and light intensity.

1 160. The system of claim 158 wherein the processor is further configured to
2 transmit a signal to the television set which causes an alarm to issue to inform the user of the
3 predetermined event detected at the sensor.

1 161. A system for alerting a user of a computer of an emergency at a remotely
2 monitored location comprising:
3 a memory device;
4 a processor in communication with the memory device;
5 and the processor configured to:
6 maintain communication with a remote sensor via a central server;
7 run a program on the computer, wherein the program is unrelated to remote
8 monitoring; and
9 pre-empt the program if a predetermined event is detected by the remote
10 sensor.

1 162. The system of claim 161 wherein the processor maintains communication with
2 the remote sensor via a browser.

1 163. The system of claim 161 wherein the predetermined event includes a
2 predetermined level of motion or sound.

1 164. The system of claim 161 wherein the processor is further configured to receive
2 video data from a camera at the remotely monitored location, and wherein preempting the
3 program includes displaying the video data.

1 165. A system for a television set to alert an individual of an emergency at a remote
2 location, comprising:
3 a memory device;
4 a processor in communication with the memory device;
5 and the processor configured to:
6 receive a signal indicative of a predetermined event detected by a sensor at the
7 remote location; and
8 in response to the signal, preempt a program to display video data received
9 from a camera at the remote location.

1 166. The system of claim 165 wherein the predetermined event includes at least one
2 of a predetermined level of motion, sound, pressure and light intensity.

1 167. The system of claim 165 wherein the processor is further configured to cause
2 an alarm to issue to inform the user of the predetermined event detected at the remotely
3 monitored location.

1 168. A method for a central server to manage remote monitoring tasks, comprising:
2 receiving a request from a user of a user device to monitor a remote location;
3 determining a remote location to be monitored;
4 determining whether predetermined criteria have been satisfied prior to
5 enabling communication between a sensor at the remote location and the user device;
6 enabling communication between the sensor and the user device;
7 measuring user attentiveness while the user device is in communication with
8 the sensor for remote monitoring purposes; and
9 crediting value to the user in accordance with an amount of time the user
10 device has been in communication with the sensor for remote monitoring purposes.

1 169. The method of claim 168 wherein the user device is a personal computer.

1 170. The method of claim 168 wherein the user device is a television set.

1 171. The method of claim 168 wherein the request is received via at least one of the
2 Internet, a wireless television network, and a cable television network.

1 172. The method of claim 169 further comprising the steps of:
2 transmitting a signal indicative of a predetermined event detected by the
3 sensor to the computer; and
4 transmitting video data from the sensor to the computer,
5 wherein the signal causes the computer to preempt a program unrelated to
6 remote monitoring to display the video data.

1 173. The method of claim 170 further comprising the steps of:
2 transmitting a signal indicative of a predetermined event detected by the
3 sensor to the television set; and
4 transmitting video data from the sensor to the television set,
5 wherein the signal causes the television set to preempt a television program to
6 display the video data.

1 SUBAID 174. A method for a central server to manage remote monitoring tasks, comprising:
2 a memory device;
3 a processor in communication with the memory device;
4 and the processor configured to:

5 receive a request from a user of a user device to monitor a remote location;
6 determine a remote location to be monitored;
7 determine whether predetermined criteria have been satisfied prior to enabling
8 communication between a sensor at the remote location and the user device;
9 enable communication between the sensor and the user device;
10 measure user attentiveness while the user device is in communication with the
11 sensor for remote monitoring purposes; and
12 credit value to the user in accordance with an amount of time the user device
13 has been in communication with the sensor for remote monitoring purposes.

1 175. The system of claim 174 wherein the user device is a personal computer.

1 176. The system of claim 174 wherein the user device is a television set.

1 177. The system of claim 174 wherein the request is received via at least one of the
2 Internet, a wireless television network, and a cable television network.

1 178. The system of claim 175 wherein the processor is further configured to:
2 transmit a signal indicative of a predetermined event detected by the sensor to
3 the computer; and

4 transmit video data from the sensor to the computer,
5 wherein the signal causes the computer to preempt a program unrelated to
6 remote monitoring to display the video data.

1 179. The system of claim 176 wherein the processor is further configured to:
2 transmit a signal indicative of a predetermined event detected by the sensor to
3 the television set; and
4 transmit video data from the sensor to the television set,
5 wherein the signal causes the television set to preempt a television program to
6 display the video data.

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